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CH Trade: 2014 Presidential E-Award Winner

Company Handles Exporting so Manufacturers Can Focus on Manufacturing

CH Trade LLC is a Fargo, N.D. based firm providing export management assistance to U.S. manufacturers. On May 28, 2014 in Washington, DC, CH Trade received the Presidential “E” Award - the highest recognition any U.S. entity may receive for exporting.

Founder Chris Harris started CH Trade in 2003 as a way to utilize his international experience with Microsoft Business Solutions and ICL/Fujitsu to help regional companies reach new markets. CH Trade currently represents Duratech Industries International Inc. (Jamestown, ND), Medora Corporation (Dickinson, ND) and CORMAX (Moorhead, MN). A unique aspect of CH Trade’s business model is that it is engaged with its principal companies at the highest level — Harris is the Vice President of International Business at all three companies. The team from CH Trade becomes an integrated part of the manufacturer’s organization, taking care of nearly every aspect of international sales and distribution.



Chris Harris, CH Trade Founder and President, receiving the E-Award from Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker.

When CH Trade takes on a new product line, they work together with the manufacturer to build international business from the ground up. First, they identify the product benefits that would appeal most to international buyers. Then, they identify the global markets with the most potential, and begin to reach out to local contacts and potential dealers in those countries. Once a dealer or customer is found, CH Trade handles every step of the sales process from quoting, negotiating payment terms, collecting funds and arranging logistics. Manufacturers who work with CH Trade have found it beneficial because the firm adds almost minimal overhead costs, but provides the potential for significant gains in sales volume. CH Trade’s team takes on most of the stress and labor-intensive tasks related to international sales, allowing the principal’s employees to focus on production and domestic sales.

Over the years, CH Trade has collaborated closely with the U.S. Commercial Service office in finding new dealers for its clients. Heather Ranck, International Trade Specialist in Fargo, has helped set up International Partner Searches, Gold Keys and Initial Market Checks. CH Trade has also partnered with the U.S. Commercial Service to host visitors in reverse trade missions, showcasing American products to delegates from other countries.

Duratech Industries manufactures industrial grinding and hay processing equipment at their facility in Jamestown, N.D. Before CH Trade, Duratech had some success with international sales, but they found it to be time consuming and less lucrative than domestic sales. Now, CH Trade acts as a department of Duratech, fielding

all international calls and emails, managing international dealers, sales and logistics, and providing after-sales support through replacement parts orders and warranty claims.



CH Trade team. Top Row (L-R): Laurens Robinson, Chris Harris, Rael Harris, Tim Harrison; Bottom Row (L-R): Rachel Wassberg, Hanna Grinaker, Nick Butze, Bob Smith

After Duratech and CH Trade teamed up, their first big success was in South Korea. An equipment dealer was very interested in Duratech grinders, but felt that the specifications were not quite right for the Korean market. Harris worked with the Duratech engineers to take an existing model, the 3010, and design a new version with tracks instead of a fifth-wheel hitch. The new model could be self-propelled with a remote control and could handle rough terrain, features that were important to Korean customers. The 3010T with the new options sold very well in Korea and has since become a standard model both domestically and internationally.

Haybuster, another product line manufactured by Duratech Industries, has also seen significant growth. In 2009, Heather Ranck traveled to South Africa and together with her colleagues from the U.S. Commercial Service in Johannesburg, South Africa, they recruited the first-ever South African delegation to the Big Iron Farm Machinery Show International Visitors Program, organized by the North Dakota Trade Office and the U.S. Commercial Service. CH Trade invited the South African delegates to see live demonstrations of Haybuster equipment and tour the Duratech factory. This visit led to the establishment of a dealership in South Africa, followed by Haybuster's participation in the USA Pavilion organized by the U.S. Commercial Service at the Nampo agricultural show in Bothaville, South Africa. These efforts led to many sales for Haybuster in South Africa.

Solarbee water circulators manufactured by Medora Corporation in Dickinson, N.D. have increased their global reach with help from CH Trade. The solar-powered water circulators are primarily purchased by governments and local water boards who require many examples and case studies before they will commit to buying. Solarbee was initially introduced to CH Trade by Heather Ranck. Through CH Trade's efforts, Solarbee now has installations all over the world in countries such as Australia, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, and the Netherlands. By having examples from a wide variety of climates and applications, CH Trade has set up the product for success with future sales.

CORMAX fitness equipment, manufactured in Moorhead, Minn., operated as a small family business for more than a decade before bringing CH Trade on board. CORMAX has a very unique patented design that makes it unlike almost any other equipment on the market, but the founders did not have the time or experience to market the product globally. CH Trade took over almost all aspects of the company from marketing and web design to sales and logistics. Recently, a company in China became CORMAX's first dealer in Asia. The Chinese company wanted to sell CORMAX equipment to their 600 clients including Olympic teams and sports universities, but they needed the equipment urgently to show at a health and fitness trade fair. CH Trade was able to organize an air freight shipment and sent a representative from the company just in time for the trade fair, resulting in a successful showing and an order for eight more units to be shipped to China.

For more information on CH Trade, call (701) 235-4505, or visit <http://www.chtrade.com/>
For information on the U.S. Commercial Service, call (701) 239-5080, or visit www.export.gov/northdakota.

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